

"EVERETTS" and "WATTSES"

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These firms were late users of overprints on their stamps. The story has been told in Bulletins 259 and 260 when we reprinted parts of a paper presented by Dr. Gordon Ward at the 12th Philatelic Conference of GB in 1925 entitled *"Thief Proof Stamps and True Philately"*

Over and underprints were an early form of protection against theft, ousted by the introduction of perfins. Overprints were banned by the Post Office whilst underprints under the gum (where they could not be washed off) were a nuisance to the then stamp printers, Perkins Bacon. This service was withdrawn anyway in 1882. The 1d lilac of De La Rue, introduced in 1881, was never underprinted under the gum, apart from some printed "Pears Soap" which were suppressed by the PO.

But at the turn of the century 2 firms pressed the PO to be allowed to use under or overprints.

For 15 years W&H Everett & Son of London, international booksellers and subscription agents, pressed for either a special, non-negotiable stamp or underprints under the gum. Eventually, in 1903, they were permitted to print over the gum (with a rubber roller the invention of Mr Arthur Everett) the letters 'WH/E&S/Ltd'. Everetts hoped to sell these rubber rollers but they never did. Illustrations of this underprint are difficult to locate. If you have an illustration in any magazine or book, could you please send a copy for our records?

They continued to use their roller until staff shortages in WW1 forced them to turn to perfins. The firm say this was a large 'E', used from 1915.

Sloper's standard 'E' 0010.01M (hardly large) is known used by them possibly from 1925. They are listed in Sloper's pre-war and post-war (W.W.II) ledgers. There may still be another 'E' die used by them from 1915 to 1925 lurking somewhere.

Also in 1903 S&J Watts & Co of Manchester, clothing warehousemen, underprinted their stamps with the word 'WATTSES' and continued until 1937. From 1932 to 1935 they used a POKO machine with the die SJ/W S4100.01. Dr Ward, in 1925, quotes Mr James Watts Jnr, who was responsible for the underprint and was a keen stamp collector, as not liking unofficial overprints or perfins. Jennings, in his history, says that earlier, Watts used a perfin and had problems with the sheets of stamps breaking up.

This perfin is not known. There are 2 possible - S&J/W S4110.01 and S&J/W S4110.01a. The latter is known used in Manchester 1902-1905 but nothing is known of the former. It may be a 2 die m/c or one may be a repair of the other. Perhaps it was inexpert operation of the machine which caused the sheets to break up and necessitated a repair. We can assume the possibility that at least S4010.01a was used by Watts. If you have either of these S&J/W dies, please report any dates, town postmarks and values. A photocopy of the reverse would be greatly appreciated.

